
Lasting Relationships: Training and Sustaining Mentors



Mentoring - Defined

Mentoring is a structured and trusting relationship that brings young people together with caring individuals who offer guidance, support and encouragement aimed at developing the competence and character of the mentee.

Program Operations

- The Core “How-To”
 - Recruitment plan for mentors/mentees
 - Screening for mentors/mentees
 - Orientation for mentors, mentees, parents
 - Training for mentors and mentees
 - Matching strategy with pre-established criteria
 - Meeting Facilitation and Activities
 - Ongoing Support and Supervision
 - Recognition
 - Closure

Lasting Relationships

Duration and consistency is very important in a mentoring relationship.

- Research shows that the impact of mentoring grows as the relationship matures.
- Short-lived matches can have a detrimental effect on youth.
- Children with incarcerated parents are particularly vulnerable to negative consequences of premature relationship termination (feelings of abandonment, low self-esteem, depression, anger, etc.)

What Can Programs Do?

A Research Corner article at Mentoring.org, “[Making Mentoring Work](#)” by Dr. Jean Rhodes substantiates four program practices, that when adhered to, predict strong and effective relationships:

- Making matches based on similar interests;
- Providing more than six hours of volunteer training;
- Offering post-match training and support; and
- Conducting reasonably intensive screening.

Screening and Risk Management

Risk

Any uncertainty about a future event that directly or indirectly threatens your organization's ability to accomplish its mission.

Risk Management

A system for managing risk.

Risk Management

Key Steps

- Identify Risk
- Evaluate and Prioritize
- Select and Implement Techniques
- Monitor and Update

What are the Benefits?

Risk management helps protect:

- Volunteers, mentees and staff
- The organization's assets
- The assets of volunteers and directors

Mentoring Specific Risks

- Mission-related
- Population
- Collaboration
- Setting Boundaries

Screening Mentors

Careful screening improves the quality of mentors and helps ensure the safety of youth involved, while also managing an organization's level of risk and liability. Components include:

- Written application
- Fingerprint criminal background checks and related checks
- Character reference checks
- Face-to-face interview
- Participation in pre-match training

Why Train Mentors?

- Pre-match training prepares mentors for the mentoring experience:
 - Develop caring relationships
 - Learn about the challenges their mentees face
 - Gain confidence in their ability to make a difference in their mentees' lives

The Four Tasks of Mentoring

- Establishing a positive personal relationship
- Developing life skills
- Assisting youth in obtaining additional resources
- Increasing awareness of and ability to interact with other social and cultural groups

Training Topics

- What is a Mentor?
- Do's and Don'ts of Mentoring
- Stages of Mentoring Relationships
- Youth Characteristics
- Communications Skills
- Program Logistics

Training Mentees and Parents

- Prepare them for the mentoring experience
 - Introduce the concept of mentoring
 - Clarify goals and manage expectations
 - Discuss policies and procedures
 - Provide guidance in communication and relationship development
 - Address fears and concerns

Making the Match

- Develop a matching strategy - a rationale and criteria for matching mentors and mentees that:
 - Addresses the needs and preferences of mentees
 - Ensures that both parties understand and agree to conditions of the match and relationship

The First Meeting

- Allows mentors and mentees to begin getting to know each other in a relaxed, comfortable atmosphere.
- Should be structured with clear goals and objectives.
- May also include:
 - Providing each mentor and mentee with basic information about the other
 - Having mentors and mentees sign a “contract”
 - Reviewing the monitoring schedule
 - Reminding everyone of upcoming events/activities

Ongoing Support and Training

- Monitoring
- Activities
- Recognition
- Ongoing Training

Why is Ongoing Support and Training Important?

- Research
 - One of Dr. Jean Rhodes' four program practices for effective mentoring relationships.
 - Introduce new skills and material for mentor and mentees
 - Reinforce important concepts
 - Engage experts
 - Provide an opportunity for mentors to learn from each other
- RETENTION!!

What is the purpose of monitoring?

- To make sure the mentor and mentee are meeting regularly
- To determine the quality of the relationship
- To address any problems or concerns that may arise
- To manage mentor and mentee expectations

A monitoring plan includes...

- A schedule for checking in with mentor, mentees and parent/caregivers (when appropriate).
- A set of questions that provides insight into the status and progress of the relationship.
- An opportunity for mentors and mentees to ask questions, raise concerns and provide feedback about their relationship or the program.

Activities

- Help establish a peer group of other mentors (mentees) for support and advice
- Provide opportunities to socialize and network
- Give mentors ideas for new things to do with their mentees
- “Spice up” a stale or rocky relationship
- Enable same-sex matches to interact with mentors and mentees of the other gender

Recognition

- All volunteers need to be recognized
- Recognition is especially important for mentoring programs because...
 - Long-term nature of program goals
 - Results are often hard to see
 - Recognition maintains morale

Ongoing Training

“Making Mentoring Work”, Dr. Jean Rhodes describes “offering post-match training and support” as one of four program practices essential for strong and effective mentoring relationships. Additionally , by providing ongoing training, programs can:

- Introduce new skills and materials
- Reinforce important concepts
- Engage experts who can provide in-depth information relevant to the youth population served
- Provide an opportunity for mentors to share their experience and learn from each other.

MENTOR

- Premier ADVOCATE for the expansion of mentoring and RESOURCE for mentors and mentoring programs nationwide
- Leading the movement to close the “mentoring gap”
- National umbrella organization for the mentoring movement...The Mentor's Mentor.

National Mentoring Institute

- Online Services
 - National Mentoring Database/VRS
 - Mentoring.org and Online Community Forums
 - After-School Clearinghouse; E-mentoring Clearinghouse
- Product Development
 - *2nd Edition of Elements of Effective Practice*
 - “How to Build a Successful Mentoring Program Using the *Elements of Effective Practice*” (Tool Kit)
- Research and Evaluation
 - *Mentoring in America 2005: A Snapshot of the Current State of Mentoring*
 - Research Agenda
 - Tracking and Evaluation System
- Training and Technical Assistance
 - Mentor and Mentee Online Training
 - E-Mentoring Training
 - Advisory Services

Contact Information

- Cindy Sturtevant
Director of Training & Technical Assistance
CSturtevant@mentoring.org